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to the German Air Force. Minister Strauss was the chief German orator on this occasion. Afterwards we had more coffee, then an interview with the local press, and finally a good smacking meal attended by 150 people.

The whole thing was admirably organized by the U. S. Element. Nick Ruffner and I flew back with General Thatcher on General Everest's wonderfully equipped Convair. Thatcher descended at Wiesbaden, and we went on through a mild snowstorm to Wahn.

At home I made a speedy change of clothes. Then we motored one and a quarter hours to Baroness von Oppenheim's house outside of Cologne. The Steels, the Capetanides, and about 20 others were there, including Minister Erhard and his wife. After dinner, Erhard pronounced his confidence in the Westerners' eventually getting the better of the Soviets. He thinks the Soviet economy is strained too hard by the expenses and manpower requirements of its military establishment to be able to continue indefinitely to match or to excel the efforts of the NATO powers.

At dinner I sat next to the German mother of Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. She is 76 and full of vim.

Sunday, December 15, 1957

[redacted]